

CLAIMS:

1. A hook for fixing a spinal support rod to a vertebra by engaging the vertebra, which has a hook portion with a recess in which vertebral tissue can be received, and a fixation portion which includes a channel in which a spinal support rod can be received, the  
5 hook including a clamp having a sharp tip which can penetrate the surface of the vertebra when it is located in the hook portion recess, in which the clamp is pivotally fixed to the hook and can be displaced between a clamping position in which it engages the surface of the vertebra to inhibit removal of the vertebra from within the recess, and a release position in which vertebral tissue can be inserted into and removed from the recess.
- 10 2. A hook as claimed in claim 1, in which the displacement of the tip between the clamping position and the release position is less than 5 mm, preferably less than 3 mm.
3. A hook as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the width of the recess in which the bone is received is smaller when the clamp is in the clamping position than when the clamp is in the release position.
- 15 4. A hook as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further comprising an actuator for displacing the clamp towards the clamping position.
5. A hook as claimed in claim 4, wherein the actuator comprises a grub screw.
6. A hook as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a stop portion which abuts the clamp when it is in the clamping position.
- 20 7. A hook as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the sharp end of the clamping member is a single point or a single sharp edge.
8. A hook as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the clamp can pivot about an axis between the channel and the hook portion, transverse to a plane intersecting the axis of the support rod when located in the channel and the hook portion.

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9. A hook as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein a side of the channel adjacent to the recess is open, such that when a rod is installed in the channel the rod acts on the clamp directly or indirectly to cause it to penetrate the bone.

5 10. A hook as claimed in claim 9, wherein the surface of the clamp which is adjacent to the channel is inclined.

11. A system for joining a rod to a bone comprising:  
a spinal support rod; and  
a hook as claimed in any one of the previous claims.